



FOREWORD

To my children.

I am writing this little book for you my son Peter, or Peterle as I used to call you when we lived in Vienna and you were the greatest 'Laubsbub' that ever was born, and you my little Wendy who is still playing with her dollies in the nursery, that you should know, one day when you are both grown up, a little more about your mother and the country where she was born and grew up, where she fell in love with your father, the great love and devotion they have to each other till this very day, and all the joys and worries they shared. But mainly about the many, many happy hours they had together, for the Gods had granted them one gift, namely, to enjoy life.

I was born in Vienna, some years before the First World War, in the most beautiful and gayest town of the Continent, but it was not the Vienna any more as it used to be before I was born. I remember mother always talking of the good old times, of the splendours of the Court under Franz Josef, the gay parties and balls with smart officers in their glittering uniforms of the K. und K. Regiments, the coffeehouses and beer gardens of the Prater crowded till the early hours of the morning, with these officers and their sweethearts, singing and drinking and making debts.

The Vienna I remember had changed, gone was the Court and the army. Austria had lost the War, the Austrian Hungarian Empire was split up. All that was left was Vienna, with its 2 million inhabitants and the beautiful scenery of its surrounding Vienna Woods, the lovely lakes and countryside of the Salzkammergut and the snow covered mountains of the Tyrol.

The population had become very poor. All these thousands of officers of His Majesty's Army were starving with their families. Money became worthless through inflation overnight and the amount of unemployed rose daily.

The Aristocrats had to sell their beautiful old houses and palaces for money that became more worthless every day till you could hardly get more than a loaf of bread for it. It was a crazy time. The old people could not forget, but the younger ones soon got over it and the bars and music halls were crowded with people enjoying themselves in a wild 'devil may care' sort of way. The young boys who had seen nothing but horror and bloodshed for years wanted to live and be gay and the men and women knew that the drink that cost a thousand kronen today would cost ten thousand tomorrow and perhaps a million next week. And if by chance you know the old Viennese Heurigen song 'Da habt mei letztes Krاندl' you will realise that this was always a typical attitude of these light hearted easygoing people of Vienna and one of their charms.

Well, this was the Vienna of my time, the time I went to school, the time of my childhood.

We lived in a nice little flat in the heart of the town, not far from the Prater. I don't know if you have any idea what the Prater was but as I simply grew up there, playing ball, hide and seek, 'Räuber und Soldaten', one of the favourite games of my childhood, there and even met your father in one of its tennis clubs, I will try to describe it to you.

First of all let me explain to you that Vienna was divided into 21 districts. The first district I would compare to the West End of London, but in a much smaller way of course. There were the finest and most beautiful ancient buildings, the famous St Stephens Church, the Vienna Hofburg etc. and the most expensive and elegant shops.

To come to the 2nd district, where the Prater was situated, you had to cross an arm of the Danube by one of its beautiful bridges, follow a long perfectly straight road, the Praterstrasse, till you came to the Praterstern, a square, in the middle of which stood a monument of an Admiral of the old Austrian navy, Tegetthof. There the Prater began.

The Prater was an enormous park, with one straight avenue called the Hauptallee, about 3 miles long with huge old chestnut trees one next to the other like soldiers all the way through. In the middle was the road for the carriages, then on both sides the riding paths and the wide foot paths. On the left hand side were the three famous open air coffeehouses called Das Erste, Das Zweite und Das Dritte Kaffeehaus. There, in my mother's younger days, the beautiful and elegant women of Vienna used to drive down the Hauptallee in their open horse drawn carriages on Sunday mornings. There they saw their dashing young

officers on horseback and there in the lovely gardens of those coffeehouses they used to meet secretly in those warm summer evenings listening to the soft music of Lanner and Strauss.

On both sides of the Hauptallee were benches and on the right hand side were the 'Kinderspielplatze' where we children were allowed to enjoy ourselves

Now this will seem strange to you, because in England in every park you are allowed to walk, sit or play on the grass. Not so in the parks of Vienna. Oh, what a time I had with you Peterle, who only 2 years old, threw the ball purposely on the grass enjoying himself immensely when your poor mother was shouted at by a policeman" if I ever catch your child gain on the grass I shall have you fined".

Well I was not as naughty and mischievous as you my son, I was perfectly happy to play with my friends on the footpaths of the Prater and my happiest days were when my father took me in a little rowing boat on a pond near the Konstantinheugel. But the best of all was the Wurstelprater.

It got its name from the Wurstelteatre, the Punch and Judy shows as you would call them, which were held there, and which were really excellent and did not only attract children, but also hundreds of grown ups. The Wurstelprater was a part of the Prater, to the left of the Hauptallee, and it was almost what you call a fun fair, yet not quite the same. It was not put up temporarily, but stood there the whole year round, its roundabouts, swings, bumper cars, shooting galleries etc. built solidly and you walked on wide roads crowded with people, especially on Sundays and holidays.

The noise there was deafening. Everywhere music played, mechanical music, each playing a different tune. Then there were the side shows. Fancy dress, men with funny moustaches shouting at the top of their voices: "Come in ladies and gentlemen, here you see what you have never seen before, the fattest woman in the world, weighing 25 stones, and the smallest man not bigger than a newborn baby". Next door a clown would show his funny tricks promising the people who came in laughter without stopping for 20 minutes.

Then there was the scenic railway. I have since seen many in other countries, but none to compete with the one in Vienna. Or does it only seem so marvellous in my memory? There were little trains that could take about 50 people which went high up over mountains and through tunnels, going down at top speed. I loved to sit in the front row, so that I could see the steep slope downhill, and it gave me such a funny feeling in my stomach that I could not help laughing every time we went downhill. I had only one wish that my father should buy this whole establishment so that I could go on it the whole day long.

Then there was the 'Grottenbahn'. This was a little train that took you slowly through grottos, where in the semi-darkness you saw the 7 dwarfs of Snow White work hard with their little hammers and the beautiful princess whom the bad witch had put to sleep for a hundred years till the brave young prince came to wake her up with a kiss, and lots of other lovely things, to delight any little child's heart.

And the 'Riesenrad' the Giant Wheel. If you ever will see a picture postcard of Vienna I am sure the Riesenrad will be on it. This and the beautiful tower of St Stephens Church are the 'Wahrzeichen' of Vienna, like the Eiffel Tower is for Paris.

The Giant Wheel was built at the time of the World Exhibition in 1904 with carriages like on a cable railway and it went round slowly taking you up higher and higher till you could look all over Vienna, then down again slowly. It went far too slow for my liking, and the only fun was when we once got stuck, high up, through a technical hitch and it took quite a long time till it went round again.



Every Sunday morning my father used to take me for a walk in the Prater. "It's good for her" mother said and, though I loved to go out with my father, I hated walking. "But don't take my child to the Wurstelprater again" mother would say, "She might easily catch whooping cough there with such crowds of children".

But needless to say, I always managed to get round him to take me to the Wurstelprater. "But not a word to mother" he would say smiling, "Why should we annoy her?" He was the kindest man that ever lived, he really could not hurt a fly.

Now let me talk about my father. I was an only child, my mother being rather strict, I gave all love and affection of my little heart to my darling father. He was the best friend of my childhood. Though much older in years than your Daddy, he was very young at heart, never too tired to play with me, or tell me the most beautiful fairy tales which he always made up himself.

I used to wait for him at the door every evening, listening for his footsteps on the stairs, and no matter how strenuous the work had been at the Bank, he would always play with me for a while before I had to go to bed. Already as a tiny baby, mother told me, if I cried in my cot, and father came into the room, I would stop crying immediately, waiting for him to pick me up.

He had the most beautiful voice, and he used to sing for me from Italian operas up to German folk songs. I soon knew them all and sang with him even 'Gaudeamus Igetur' and all the songs he used to sing as a young student. "The girl must have a good voice" but no

matter how hard we both tried, and how much I would have loved it, I had to disappoint him.

Oh how happy was when sometimes on a glorious Sunday morning in Spring, he used to take his walking stick, give me my little rucksack, and off we went, just the two of us, by tram, to Grinzing and out into the Vienna woods. He was a very keen mountaineer in his younger days, he had been on nearly all the high mountains of Switzerland, but when he married the first thing mother did was to get rid of his climbing outfit and so he gave it up. He told me, with a smile, that was a little sad.

I think I inherited his love for the mountains but he would not allow me to do any real climbing when we spent the summer in the Tyrol in later years. "Just because I know their danger" he would say, looking up at those snow covered peaks, if I asked him why he would not let me ho, he, who had been so keen on it himself.

Once a week I used to visit Granny. She was very old, and lived together with a widowed daughter. She was my mother's mother. She had 7 children, 3 sons and 4 daughters of whom mother was the youngest. They were all alive except one son.

I remember grandmother as a very small woman, always dressed in black, with beautiful black lace shawls round her shoulders and a little lace cap on her head to cover her thin white hair.. She was very particular about her clothes. Her shoes were made to measure by a Court shoemaker, to cover the daintiest little feet I had ever seen on a woman, and they were s light as a feather. She never understood that my mother would wear ready made shoes.

All around her room, in little glass cupboards and on little tables, stood the loveliest little figures of old china. She allowed her grandchildren and great-grandchildren to play with them. I wish she had treasured them more and given them to us rather when we were grown up as a lot of these beautiful shepherds of famous Meissen porcelain were broken by us children. In the glass vitrine of our drawing room I have a few beautiful old crystal glasses and silver baskets that used to be hers, and which will be yours, one day, my children.

I still remember her, sitting in her big armchair in the semi-darkness of late winter afternoons, while the sparks of a cosy fire lit up the room with a warm glow, playing funny tricks on walls and furniture. No matter how many degrees of frost or how thick the snow lay outside, for we had very severe winters in Vienna, the good old Kachelofen always kept the room warm and cosy. She was always knitting white woollen socks or stockings for her grandchildren but which nobody ever would wear. During the War, wool was very scarce in Vienna, and my aunt used to undo them secretly as soon as Granny had finished a pair so that she always had wool to knit.

I loved to sit at my grandmother's feet on a low stool, listening to her stories of the good old days. She only lived in the past, and the older she became, she died when she was 89, the less she could remember recent events, but she had a marvellous memory about everything that happened many many years ago.

Of all her tales I liked it best to hear about her 7 children, and the headache they gave her when they were young. I think being an only child myself I could not hear enough of them, especially about her sons Sami and Max. The first one must have been a great mischief, giving her a lot of worry, but he had a kind heart and I liked him very much. The other one, Max, was as serious as the first one was wild, always reading and learning, with one aim, to

become rich. I will tell you about this uncle Max later on, he really achieved what he wanted, wealth and success, but I don't think it made him a very happy man after all.

Uncle Sami I remember as a very tall handsome man, still very jolly, who used to lift his old mother up as if she were a doll, when he came to see her. Although he had become a respectable businessman I think she had a great weakness for her son Max, probably it was her pride in his success. I do not think he treated her very well though. He was too busy to come and see her except on very rare occasions, and he was not a bit as generous to her as would have become such an enormously wealthy man.

Already in his childhood Max would hoard apples and sweets, and hide them, until one day Sami of course found them, and would quickly share them out among the others. The result of course was a big fight. But Sami was a naughty boy. He would suddenly remember that he wanted to eat a certain cake, knowing that there was none in the house he would stand at the front porch of their house yelling at the top of his voice "Ja chzi buchti". Buchtli are little yeast cakes filled with apples or plum jam. My grandparents lived at first in the province of Bohemia which till the independence of Czechoslovakia belonged to Austria, and the children spoke both Czech and German.

As soon as his mother would come out, he would run away, only to come back after she went in and started yelling again. He would not stop and the neighbours would run out of their houses, wondering what had happened to that poor child who was crying so bitterly.

I still remember her sweet voice telling me all these stories, which I could hear over and over again. She would lean over from time to time, stroking back my wilful little curls which would keep on dropping over my forehead, no matter how tight my mother used to do my hair up. I used to hear a lot about my beautiful golden hair, when I was a child, which I wore loose over my shoulders till I went to school. Then mother did them up in two long thick plaits.

Granny would always enquire how I was getting on at school and when I told her that I had private lessons in French, she would say "Learn my child, learn as much as you can while you are young".

Well I did learn quite a lot. Besides having school in the morning and afternoon I had private lessons in French and later in English. I was gifted for languages and also very good at drawing and I went to an art school later on.

The first school I went to was called the "the Volksschule". There were no private schools in Austria and every child rich or poor went there when it was 6 years old. They would council schools and every district had quite a number of them. There was the Volksschule fur Maedchen and in the next building was the Volksschule fur Knaben. We went there for 4 or 5 years. No matter how brilliant you were you had to stay one year in a form.

My form mistress, Miss Grandauer, was an elderly spinster. She wore her hair swept up high into a little nest at the top of her head. Her dresses and blouses went right up till right under her chin. With little bones round her neck which I suppose was the reason she could not turn her head easily and made her appear so stiff. There was no nonsense about her, but though she was very strict, she was very just. We were all afraid of her, and when I met her once many years later, I had the same sensation of awe and respect as if I would still be the little girl at her school.

The second person that I feared at school was Herr Boleslow, our school porter. He was a sturdy man with a red face and a big moustache like a sergeant major and he stood every morning before school began at the front door, watching that each child should wipe its feet properly on the doormat. Woe to that poor child that was in a hurry, fearing the school bell to go any moment, and who tried to slip by quickly. His shouts and threats were terrible.

All these things must seem strange to you Peter, who were a lucky little boy to go to school in England, where children are brought up without fear and where teachers and pupils are the best of friends. Another thing which you would not have liked at all was that school began at 8 o'clock in the morning. I really think it was a bit cruel to wake these little mites up at 7 am especially in winter when it was still pitch dark, and so bitterly cold. I remember dashing out of the house a few minutes before 8 always blaming mother for my being late, because she took too long in doing my hair up in those two long plaits I wore. I used to wear a little red cap and this probably accounted for my nickname "Rotkaeppchen" at school, which was the equivalent of Little Red Riding Hood. One of the greatest impressions of my childhood was the first time my parents took me to the theatre. You see there were no cinemas at my time, no television, not even wireless.

The play I saw was Puss in Boots. I remember that there was lovely ballet dancing and the nice music. As soon as those sweet little girls began the ballet dance on the stage, I got up from my seat which was a corner seat, and copied step by step the whole dance much to the discomfort of my parents who could not stop me but to the delight of the audience.

I was so excited when the play had ended my cheeks burning hot, that mother took a taxi home, instead of the usual tram. The dancing must have made a very great impression on me, because one evening weeks after, when mother came into my bedroom, thinking me fast asleep, she found me dancing in front of the mirror with only my nightdress on and in bare feet. I confessed having done so every evening since I had been to the theatre.

Many people asked mother why she did not let me learn ballet dancing as I was so graceful but she would not hear of such "nonsense".

Mother was a very practical woman, and though I did not get on too well with her at times, and often thought her unkind, I realise now, that I have a lot to thank her for. First that she never spoiled me, and as I have seen quite a few of those spoiled only children, and what they turned out into later on, I am very grateful to her. From her I also got my common sense and to see the practical side of things in life.

I think I can say similar to Goethe, the famous German poet:

*Vom Vater hab ich die Statur des Lebens ernstes Fuehren,
Von Muetterchen die Frohnatur, die Lust zum Fabulieren,*

only with me it applies the other way around, it is from mother I learned 'Des Lebens Ernstes Fuehren', and from my father 'die Frohnatur, die Lust zum Fabulieren'.

Another important event of my childhood was when about twice a year I was dressed in my best clothes and taken to a visit to "Uncle Max". I think I mentioned his name to you previously; he was my mother's brother, the one who was so fabulously rich. He lived with his family in a most beautiful house on the Hohe Warte, a suburb of Vienna where the most elegant villas stood. His house was famous in the society of Vienna for its beautiful collections of pictures and oriental carpets, and it was 'Unter Denkmalschutz' which means

When you entered the house you came into an enormous hall lavishly furnished with the most precious Persian carpets and rugs. On the walls hung famous pictures and the finest tapestries. In the middle of the hall a very wide staircase took you up to a big landing which could be used as a living room and I used to love leaning over its banisters and to look down at this beautiful place which was brilliantly lit by an enormous crystal chandelier. On the ground floor were the library, the dining room, the drawing rooms and the breakfast room, a very cosy little room, furnished in Tyrolese peasant style. On the first floor were a lot of beautiful bedrooms and dressing rooms. Then there was a separate staircase which led to the 'tower' where the guestrooms were and where Uncle Max also had his own room which he called his work room. The servant's quarters were quite separate. The house was surrounded by a garden of about 2 acres. There was of course also a tennis court, where the two daughters Vally and Steffi and their younger brother Hans.

They gave big parties where the old Austrian nobility mingled with the wealthy industrialists. And a lot of diplomats from all over the world. Needless to say, none of the relatives of Uncle Max were ever invited at any party but his wife's family were all persona grata there. One of 'Tante Mitzi's' brothers was the well known Viennese gynaecologist Prof Halban, and his wife the world famous singer Selma Kurz.

When Uncle Max was a boy of about 17, he left his home in the little town in Bohemia and went to Russia. There in Baku, in the Caucasus, a brother of my grandmother lived, who had a very good job there. I think he was Manager or Inspector at some estates that belonged to the Rothschild family. He had taken a fancy to this ambitious son of his sister, and promised to give him a chance. Well Uncle Max worked very hard out there, working for his living during the day and studying half the nights, but he made a great career. When he came to Vienna where the family had moved to in the meantime, as a man of about 30, he owned oil wells and silver mines in the Caucasus and I think was also a shipbuilder.

He married a very beautiful girl of about 17 in Vienna, but though she went with him to Russia to live there, she came twice a year to Vienna, 'to do her shopping', and she always spent quite a few months there. They had two daughters and later on a son. The daughters had the same beautiful appearance as the mother, tall, slim, and fair, and Uncle Max was very proud when his wife and daughters went out together and were taken for sisters.

When the daughters were nearly grown up, they went to school in England and Switzerland. Uncle Max decided to settle down permanently in Vienna, and only got to Russia occasionally, to look after his interests there. This was when he bought his beautiful villa had it furnished by the most famous architects, and brought a lot of priceless carpets, rugs and pieces of art from Russia.

Soon after, the First World War broke out, and when it ended and he intended to go to Russia to see to his property out here, Bolshevism came, and all his property was confiscated and taken over by the state.

Of course he still had some money left, but the bulk of his fortune and all he had built up was gone. It must have hit him very hard, but not as hard as the tragedy of his younger daughter.

Steffi was his favourite, and besides being very beautiful she was also very sweet. She fell in love with an Austrian aristocrat, a former officer of the Austrian army, a good many years older than herself, and who was married before. They married and from the beginning her

mother in law, with whom she lived in the same house, treated her like a stranger. She never spoke a word to her nor to her sweet baby girl she had a year after. She considered her son had made a 'Mesalliance' and she never forgave her.

When my uncle heard about this and also saw that his son in law did not treat her properly he begged her to take the baby and come back home, but she still loved her husband and would not hear of it. Then one day there was some scandal, I was too young to know what it was about, and poor Steffi committed suicide by shooting herself with her husband's rifle. She was only 21 and left a baby of about one year, the sweetest little baby you can imagine.

Since that time uncle Max became an old man. He never got over it. He tried to get his little grandchild but 'they' would not allow it, although I am sure that poor child never got any love from its father or its father's mother.

When his older daughter Valli married an Italian count and settled down in Italy, and the upkeep and taxes of his big house became more and more exorbitant, he let it to an American Consul and moved with his wife to a furnished flat. His son Hans, who had none of his father's gifts or ambitions, did not care for 'the old place' as he called it, at all, and he went somewhere abroad. So in his old age, Uncle Max and his wife led a very secluded and rather lonely life, I think, and all his ambition and success did not bring him much happiness in the end.

I mentioned previously that I was gifted for drawing. I was no great talent, but whenever I got hold of a pencil I had to draw. You should have seen my school books, they looked terrible. All around the pages I made sketches of the teachers and pupils, some quite good as I was told.

You remember, Peterle, when you were a little boy and in bed with a cold, I used to sit with you and do little drawings and paintings for you, and didn't you loved them!. Do you remember also the illustrations you admired in the little book I made for you in order to teach you German?

Like you darling, I was pretty bad in Math and Geometry at school, but good at languages, and my essays were usually read out in my form. When I was about 8 years old I wrote an essay 'Die Geschichte eines Hellerleins', which was read to the whole school and which father very proudly took to the bank and read it to his colleagues.

Later on I tried myself at a little story, the adventures of a girl, which my schoolfriends liked very much and begged me to continue. So every 'Handarbeitsstunde', which means needlework lesson, instead of knitting, I used to read to them the latest adventures of my heroine. Of course I had the worst marks in 'Handarbeit', while my friends knitted one pair or socks in a term it took me 3 terms to knit one white sock, which by the end of the school year was naturally more black than white.

When I was about 12 years old, I made my first big journey to a foreign country. I think since that time I always wanted to travel. My father used to tease me about my 'Wanderlust' saying jokingly "My girl you must marry a circus director one day, then you shall be able to see as much of the world as you want".

Well, I did not marry a circus director after all, and I still have travelled quite a bit, as I was fortunate to meet your Daddy, who has the same great longing to see other countries and who has taken me with him on most of his journeys.

Now this first journey took me to København, the capital of Denmark. It was arranged by these hospitable countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, to invite a number of Austrian schoolchildren after the war and when food was still scarce in Vienna to give them a good time.

I was very glad my mother let me go although nearly all her family was very much against it. We went a whole train full of children, boys and girls between 6 and 14 years, accompanied by a few grownups. The journey was very long, I think a whole day and night across Czechoslovakia and Germany till we came to the Baltic. There I saw the sea for the first time in my life, and I was greatly impressed. You see Austria was quite far from the sea, the nearest being the Adriatic, which I did not see till many years later.

I remember Copenhagen quite well. It is a very clean and gay town, the gayest of the three Scandinavian capitals. The people are extremely hospitable, and everybody was charming to us 'Wienerbørn' as we were called.

I still remember the big 'Raadhusplaaas' in the middle of the town, not far from the station where we arrived. There stood the town hall with its famous clock tower which struck every hour loudly and clearly, there the Spørvogns the trams, went round with its tidy curtains at the windows, and there a stream of cyclists went by every day, children going to school, men and women to work, housewives doing their shopping, everybody on bicycle. There were special paths for the cyclists everywhere and hundreds of parking places for them.

I liked to walk along Lange Linie, a beautiful promenade along the seafront, passed the yacht club and the elegant restaurant but best of all I liked the 'Lille Søjomfru', the little sea maiden of H C Andersen's famous fairytales which sat there on a stone modelled by the famous Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen.

Sometimes the water came right up to where she sat, and it looked as if she were just rising out of the sea. It is many years since I saw it but I still remember that sweet expression on her beautiful face.

I also remember the Tivoli, the amusement park of Copenhagen, with its restaurants, scenic railway and fun fair, and the hundreds of coloured lamps and lanterns that lit it up in the evening and especially the wonderful fireworks that I have seen there.

The education of the children in Denmark is very free. Boys and girls go away together on their holidays, and when the young people give a party at home the parents go out for the night so as not to disturb them.

I stayed there with very kind people for about 5 months, and we used to write to each other for a long time after I had returned home. I learned to speak Danish like a native, and though I have forgotten a good deal in all these years, I still could make myself understood when I met a Danish crowd last year in Switzerland.

I made a very interesting excursion by car from Copenhagen to Helsingør, following the 'Strandway', a road which runs all the time parallel to the sea. There I stood on the famous Kronborg Slot, the castle, where Hamlet, Prince of Denmark lived, watched the old cannons pointing across the sea to Sweden. Its only about 3 miles away and standing there I could clearly see nearly every house of Helsingør, the little Swedish town on the other side of the Belt. There I also watched the Sound meeting the open sea, the Kattegat. Copenhagen is

really situated at the Sound whereas the North Sea is in the west and north of Denmark, the Kattegat being a part of it.

I also must not forget to tell you about the nice food I had in Denmark especially the wonderful 'Smørebrød' which you, my always hungry Peter boy, would enjoy just as much as I did. These are sandwiches of different kinds of bread, thin slices, then cut in half, and each has a different and delicious thing on, like cold roast beef, pork, tongue, pate de foie, all kinds of herrings, cheese etc. We always got a big plateful of these delicacies for lunch and afterwards strawberries with cream or the delightful Rødgrød med Fløde, which is a kind of fruit jelly with cream. I can hear you say darling "Boy, what a country", you are right, 'Det er et yndigt Land' that's how one of their folk songs goes, and it really is a very nice country and not only because of their very nice food.

I spent a very happy time there and my foster mother and I wrote to each other for a very long time in Danish and I always wanted to go and see them again one day but though I travelled quite a bit since I married I somehow never came to dear old Denmark again.

When I was about 16 I was allowed to learn ballroom dancing, and it was quite a thrill for me when mother accompanied me twice a week to the famous dancing school of Munich Fraenzl. In our class were about between 15 and 20 young girls and about the same amount of young men. The girls were nearly all accompanied by their mothers who sat on chairs along the walls watching their daughters all the time. Usually, Mr Fraenzl senior was our teacher but sometimes Willy Fraenzl his son came up. He was the first dancer of the ballet of the Vienna Opera and of course every girls ideal.

We learned modern dancing, but naturally also the Viennese Waltz. I enjoyed it immensely. There were, of course, silly little jealousies among the girls. If one girl danced several times with a boy the other one had considered as her beau or if one envied the other one her pretty frock but on the whole the atmosphere there was very nice and we all enjoyed it very much. Oh, it was heavenly to be helped in my coat by one young man after the dancing, while another would kneel down before me to put my snow boots on. I felt really 'grown up'! It was also the first time somebody said to me 'Küss die Hand gnaediges Fraulein', a greeting customary only in Austria, where a gentleman also kissed a lady's hand when he met her or was introduced to her.

When I was 17 I went to my first Ball. My ball dress was of pink taffeta and tulle, and though it was an old dress of mothers remade, I felt like a Queen in it!! Our neighbours came to see 'little Gerty' dressed for her first ball, and they all agreed, that I looked lovely. They were very sweet, each bringing me something, one a little lace handkerchief that was her mothers, another a little evening bag, etc. but I'm afraid I was not really nice to them as I was too impatient to listen to their well meant advice, I only wanted to go at last.

The Ball was at the Sofiensaal, one of Vienna's nicest ballrooms and everything was wonderful. I danced till I could hardly stand on my feet, and when I came to mothers table to sit down for a moment, immediately two or three young men turned up to ask me for a dance. The band played of course a lot of waltzes, the atmosphere was very gay, and when we went home in the early hours of the morning it seemed like a wonderful dream to me.

I went to lots of Balls and fancy dress dances later on but none held quite the same thrill for me as this, my first ball. I hope that one day, you my little Wendy, will have the same experience, and that I shall be able to go with you and see your lovely blue eyes shine with

the same joy and excitement as mine must have done. Only it probably will not be at 'Fasching-time' in Vienna!

Now let me explain to you what 'The Fasching' in Vienna was in those days, so that you will learn more about these gay and light hearted people that lived in this town where both your parents were born.

Every year from about the middle of January till end of February or beginning of March, young and old, rich and poor, danced and enjoyed himself, it was 'Fasching', in Vienna, carnival time. In all the big halls, like the Conzerthaus, Sofiensaal, or at the Kuenstlerhaus Balls and fancy dress dances were being held, some only on invitations, others for everybody who could afford the price of the tickets. The most elegant and most expensive one was the 'Opernball', which was held at the beautiful Viennese Opera House. There you saw the most elegant women of Vienna, and men were only allowed in in tails and top hat. Like at most Balls, women had to wear masks till midnight which allowed for a lot of fun and intrigues.

The gayest I think was the 'G'schnasfest', a fancy dress ball, which was held every year by the artists of Vienna at the Kuenstlerhaus, where normally the painters exhibited their work, like at the Royal Academy at Burlington House in London.

The artists transformed this building and all its rooms for this one night into a different place. They painted and decorated the walls every year according to the slogan they gave their Ball, like, for instance, 'A Night in Timbuktu' one year, or 'With Lindberg Around the World' the next year. They appeared in groups most crazily dressed and behaved also utterly crazy sometimes, but it was great fun and everybody enjoyed himself.

The atmosphere in all these places was very gay, no young man had to wait to be introduced in order to dance with a girl he wanted to dance with, he just asked her for the dance or even took her away from her partner if he wanted to dance with her. Yes this was gay Vienna, nobody cared what the next day would bring, if he only enjoyed the night. Everybody seemed to live up to the song:

*Es wird a Wein sein, und wir werdn nimmer sein,
Drum g'niessn ma s'Leben so lang's uns g'freut,
S'wird schoene Maderln geben, und wir werd'n nimmer leb'n
D'rum greif ma zua, g'rad is no Zeit.*

Some people went to two or three places in one night, and you could meet crowds going home in the early hours of the morning, walking arm in arm, through the quiet empty streets of Vienna, singing and laughing noisily, but nobody cared. It was 'Faschingtime'.

Some also went to certain coffeehouses that were open all night, to wait for the first tram to take them home in the morning, as very few young people had cars in Vienna, and they even did not have enough money left for a taxi.

Yes the Viennese certainly had a gift to enjoy life, even with little money. I wonder what it was about Vienna that made the people so light-hearted and gay, was it the air or the wine, or was it the music, or maybe it was that every Viennese had a little bit of an artists love for beauty and gaiety.

And they were never in a hurry, no matter how busy a man was, he always had time for a good warm meal in the middle of the day, either at home or in the restaurant, and he also had to find time to go to his beloved coffeehouse, either in the afternoon or evening. A Viennese without his coffeehouse was like a fish out of water, it was just unthinkable.

Now the coffeehouse was not a place where you just went for a cup of coffee, like you would go in London for a cup of tea. No, the Viennese coffeehouse belonged to Vienna, it was part of it. There are coffeehouses in Paris or Brussels huge places where a band plays in the evenings, but there was something about the Viennese coffeehouse, its atmosphere, it's warm, cosy homeliness I think, which made it unique.

The first district, 'die Stadt' as we called it, had of course the nicest coffeehouses but there were also plenty of nice coffeehouses in all the other districts and in the suburbs of Vienna. Every Viennese had his 'Stamm Kaffee' where he went every day for years, where the waiters knew him by his name and brought him the morning papers he liked to read, for in every coffeehouse all the local papers were there for the guests to read, even fashion magazines for the ladies. There the head waiter or 'Herr Ober' as he was called, was like a friend to you, you could come to him with your troubles and he would give you fatherly advice. He was usually an old man, who remembered your father coming to the same place and the talks he used to have with him over politics etc. Then you were always sure to meet some friends there, regularly at the same time every day and often business deals were settled there, all while you had your delicious cup of coffee.

Now in Vienna you would not just order a cup of coffee, there was a big variety and every Viennese knew the termini tecnici for it. Now let's see if I can still remember it:

First there was 'Eine Melange' which meant a cup of white coffee

Then there was a 'Schale Gold' which was a small cup of white coffee

Then 'Kaffee mit Schlag' meaning white coffee with whipped cream

Then 'Ein Schwarzer' being a cup of black coffee

Then came the 'Einspaenner' that was black coffee with whipped cream served in a glass

Then a 'Kapuziner'

I am sure there were a lot more but I just cannot remember them any more. Now a peculiar custom in Vienna was that with every coffee a glass of fresh cold water was served on the tray, which puzzled every foreigner as to its purpose, but which only meant to be taken after you drank your coffee. You could sit in the coffeehouse for hours reading all the papers, meeting your friends or sweetheart there, and not order anything else but a coffee. But automatically, about every 20 minutes, a waiter would come and bring you on a tray a fresh glass of cold water. Yes they were very proud of their good old 'Hochquellenwasser' and it sure was good as the Americans would say.

In Spring the boss would say 'Schani trag den Garten raus' and in no time a terrace was put up in front of any coffeehouse so that you could enjoy your coffee or your 'Eiskaffee' in glorious sunshine while at the same time admire the pretty girls passing by in their new spring outfit. Oh wasn't it nice to sit on the terrace of the Huebners Kaffeehaus overlooking the Stadtpark, listening to the lovely waltzes played by an excellent band in the park, and looking across at good old Johann Strauss playing the fiddle there (I mean of course his bronze statue).

Oh how lovely it was to sit there on a warm summer evening at a little table for two, at the cosy light of a little shaded lamp. Sometimes Daddy would take me there for supper which was quite an extravagant thing for us to do, as we could not afford such expensive places in our young days. But Daddy and I always loved to live and enjoy life.

Oh how unforgettably beautiful was it also to sit on the terrace of the Cobenzl or Kahlenberg Hotel, high up on a hill on the Vienna woods and look down over the roofs of Vienna. You could see the Blue Danube which was not so blue after all, but looked more like a silver ribbon glittering in the sunshine, with all the old houses crowding round it and dear old 'Steffel', as the tower of St. Stephens Church was called, reaching high up above them all. How many love couples used to sit there hand in hand just like us, watching the lights come up in the houses and streets far below, and listen to the distant music from one of the wine gardens of Grinzing, the famous Heurigen where Daddy and I loved to go.

But slowly here I am talking about Daddy but I wanted to tell you a little more about my life before I met him.

Now I think I mentioned earlier that I went to an Art School. There besides drawing and painting I also learned Kunstgewerbe, like hand-printing of scarves, art book binding etc. I liked it very much.

Then one day, I was not quite 17 yet, my father came home, and told mother that he had met a friend of his who asked if he did not know of an intelligent girl who speak English well, as a secretary to a business friend of his from England. When father finished I said to the utter amazement of both, that I would like to apply for the job. Father thought it was a good joke, that I, who could neither do shorthand nor typewriting, who, as a matter of fact, did not even know what a business letter looked like, wanted to apply for a job as a secretary. All I knew was a few languages. (I spoke French, English, Danish and Czech by that time). The latter I had picked up at home, as mother always employed a Czech maid considering them the best workers.

I joined in his laughter but at the same time making a note of the address. You see, although I loved going to the Art School I also wanted to enjoy life. I told you before I think, that I had inherited mother's practical mind, and I realised that life had become rather difficult. My father had lost a lot of money, first through the inflation of the Austrian currency when all his savings and insurances had become worthless, and later on by the great slump on the Stock Exchange when he lost quite a lot in shares.

Now I wanted to enjoy life, like joining an expensive tennis club, travelling etc and I knew I could not ask my parents for all this. Till I could earn my own pocket money by painting might take years and I decided quite suddenly that I would try and do something else.

I did not tell anyone, but went to the address father had mentioned. I felt a bit excited at first but soon felt at ease as Mr O, the Englishman, was very nice and did not laugh at me when I told him truthfully that I could not do any shorthand or typewriting, but that I would learn it quickly, if he would give me a chance. He said my English was quite good although I had a job to understand him as he spoke all the time with his pipe in his mouth. He said he had engaged already another lady, but it did not matter. He was going away on a business trip to Romania but would be back in about 3 week's time, and I could in the meantime make myself useful at the office. At the same time I should practice shorthand and typewriting, mainly English shorthand, and if by the time he came back I could do it, I could keep the job.

I was thrilled and promised everything, although I had no idea, how and where I could learn English shorthand. When I came home and told my parents proudly that I had a job with a nice salary, they thought I was joking. Well I had made up my mind, and you know if I make up my mind to do something, I always do it.

The office was in the same building as the Export and Industry Bank of Vienna, the Director being a personal friend of my boss. His secretary, to whom I was introduced, was very helpful, and she promised to lend me a little book on English shorthand, but I would have to know German shorthand first. I practiced typewriting during the office hours and in the evening I taught myself shorthand. I worked with such enthusiasm and determination that my parents were genuinely surprised. I sat up till late at night writing one page after another and my poor father or anyone I could get hold of had to dictate to me.

There was not much to do at the office, especially while Mr O was away, and the other lady, who was of course much older than I, was very efficient, but could not do English correspondence.

One day I was getting quite pleased with myself, the Director of the Bank called me to his office. His secretary was away, and he had heard that I could do English correspondence, if I wouldn't mind taking a letter over for him. I said 'certainly', although I felt far from certain about it. I could follow quite well, and when he had finished, I wanted to get up and go to my office, hoping that I should be able to read it.

And then a terrible thing happened: I heard a voice say calmly, "Now will you please read the whole letter out to me". I thought I would faint. I knew I would not be able to read that letter and only if I had been left to myself in the quiet of my office, I might be able to decipher it gradually. But this...I only wished that the earth would open and swallow me up. But no such thing happened, and I had to sit down again, and really read this letter out, the first business letter that had been dictated to me in my life. I felt hot and miserable, and I still wonder at the enormous patience of this man, listening to my stammering for more than one hour. Every time the telephone rang, or somebody came in, I wanted quickly to disappear but every time he stopped me. "Don't run away child", he said smiling, "Take your time, I don't mind". When at last I had finished, utterly exhausted, he looked at me kindly and said: "Well you're not very good at it yet, are we. But then you are still very young, only just 17 I heard, you will improve".

He was a very kind old gentleman but I am sure that when I at last dared to look up, his eyes were actually laughing, he must have enjoyed it torturing me like that. Well in a few months time I laughed about the whole thing myself. I did all the English correspondence by then, even dictated letters to others, and with 17½ years had become an efficient secretary. I had a very nice salary for such a young girl, joined one of the fashionable tennis clubs in the Prater, as I had wanted to do, and became a very enthusiastic tennis player.

My boss, Mr O, was very kind to me, even gave me a month's holiday the first year, as my parents always used to go to the mountains in summer for at least one month and they would not have allowed me to stay in Vienna on my own. I was very proud about my job and liked the work very much. I improved my English a great deal there, and even learned something about English worsteds. What a coincidence that in years to come I was to live in England, and hear a lot about English worsteds, as the young man who I met at the tennis club, whom I loved and married, was to make it his livelihood.

One day about 1½ years later, Mr O had to return to England owing to private reasons and he gave up his Vienna office. I was very sorry as I had liked to work for him. It was easy for me to get another job, as I could do German, French and English correspondence now. I worked again for an English firm, but the business hours there were too long for me and when summer came and I couldn't get a month holiday, I left.

That summer we went to Gossensass, a very beautiful place in the mountains just behind the Brennerpass. It belonged to Austria once but since the War, everything south of the Brenner became Italian. I had the occasion there to practice again my knowledge of the Italian language which I had picked up two years before also in summer. By the way, I must tell you more about that, as that was when I got my first proposal of marriage, and as I was only 17 I was of course very thrilled and flattered.

He was an Italian, or to be more accurate a Sicilian, from Palermo. He was a doctor, about 9 years older than I was, a very nice and educated man. There was a whole crowd of Italians staying that summer in the little mountain place in the Tyrol, families from Rome, Palermo and even from Cagliari in Sardinia. They could not speak a word of German, but like all educated Italians they spoke very well French, and as I could speak French, I soon made their acquaintance. The girls were very smartly dressed, wearing beautiful printed silk dresses and big straw hats, but it seemed a bit out of place in this Austrian mountain village where everybody wore 'dirndl', the Austrian peasant costume with a little apron. I loved it and I always wore it on my holidays in Tyrol. I still kept one and it must be somewhere put away in my wardrobe together with Daddy's 'lederhosen' which suited him so well.

They were a very jolly crowd these Contes and Contesses, and I wondered if in Italy everybody had a title as they all seemed to belong to nobility. They all knew one another and were either relations or friends. They called me 'La Biondina' as I was as fair as they were dark.

'Il Dottore', the doctor was the most distinguished of them all. His parents had a big nursing home in Palermo and he came of a very well known and wealthy family. Although I liked him and felt very flattered at his proposal, I told him straightaway that I did not love him and could not marry him. He said I was too young perhaps to know my own mind and he would not mind waiting. He actually asked my parents for my hand and although they thought me much too young to even consider it, he asked for their consent to write to me and if he could come in about 6 months time to Vienna and propose again.

He was very much in love with me, but I must do him credit, he never tried to persuade me into marrying him by describing his beautiful country and the life there in the rosiest light. On the contrary he told me how little freedom the women had there, never allowed even to go for a walk unless with an escort, and how terribly jealous the men were. The well-known 'Vendetta' still reigned there, and it was by no means easy for a woman who was used to freedom to settle down in Sicily.

Although all this was not very encouraging, I do not think it would have stopped me from marrying him if I had loved him, as I was to love your father, whom I would have followed no matter where his home had been. Anyway I was very flattered to have my first proposal when barely 17 and was dying to tell my girlfriends in Vienna about it. But my answer was no and it was still no, when he came to Vienna 6 months later to propose again.

Well this was how I got my knowledge of the Italian language which I think is the most beautiful language I know. When I went two years later with my parents to the south Tyrol for our summer holidays it was very convenient that I could speak Italian.

We stayed at Colle Isarco-Gossensass, the northern gate of the south Tyrol. From there I made a most beautiful trip by car, through the wonder world of the Dolomites.

South Tyrol and the Dolomites is one of the most attractive countries in Europe. The Dolomites, great masses of pinkish grey rock, rise out of lovely grassy valleys. No two mountains are alike, and the beauty of their form unique. Their colouring, changing in the different light from pink to deep red and mauve at sunset is a most magnificent sight.

When we left Gossensass we went via the Jauffenpass to Meran. This is a most famous health resort. Owing to its wonderfully mild climate through the whole year. It has wonderful promenades and is as beautiful in spring when its thousands of fruit trees are blooming, as in autumn when its famous grapes are gathered.

High above the town you see the mighty thousand year old castle where in the Middle Ages the Counts of Tyrol reigned and from which the country had received its name.

Then we came to Bolzano-Bozen, the capital of the south Tyrol. The first Dolomite group, the legendary King Laurins Rosegarden, make a wonderful background to this old town with its narrow streets and medieval buildings. It was very hot there, as the town lies already very southerly, and only about 700ft high. But from there the great Dolomite route begins. The road climbing continuously through narrow valleys, past waterfalls, over narrow bridges. The rocks of the Dolomites towering high above you in ever changing glorious scenery.

We stopped for lunch at Carezza-Karersee, above 5000 ft high at the foot of the Rosengarten, where the air was lovely and cool. Karersee takes its name from a little lake beautifully set among the pine woods, deep green of colour and as clear as a crystal. There is only one hotel, a place of great luxury, where you meet an international crowd.

The road keeps on climbing, over mountain passes about 9000 ft high until you come to the lovely lake of Misurina, its beautiful azure colouring only to be compared with the Lago di Garda. I shall never forget the alpine glowing I saw there at sunset.

I think even you, Peterle, who hardly ever can stop talking, would for once be speechless and gaze in wonder at the sight of such beauty of Mother Nature at her best.

After this glorious summer holiday we went back to Vienna, and I started looking round for a new job. I wanted some interesting work, but at the same time not too strenuous.

Then one day I read in 'The Neue Wiener Tageblatt' an advertisement, which I thought would just suit me. A secretary was wanted by some foreign personality who was staying for a few months in Vienna. Knowledge of English and French essential. To apply at the Grand Hotel.

When I came there, there were already quite a number of girls waiting, and when my turn came, I was called into a private suite, and interviewed by a Frenchman. He asked me about my experience, and spoke all the time about 'her' wanting this, and 'her' wanting that, and

'she' doing this, till at last I asked who 'she' was. "Mademoiselle Baker" of course, he said, quite surprised that I did not know.

Mademoiselle Baker was no other than Josephine Baker the coloured dancer of world fame, who was engaged to dance at a Vienna theatre for a few months. He was her secretary from Paris, but as there was so much correspondence from all over the world, and as he had to see to so many other things, he needed help. She had of course her own manager with, an Italian Count, but as he was her lover at the same time, he did not have much time to attend to her business affairs; or rather she did not give him much time. But all this, of course, I only found out after I had started working for her.



Yes, I really got the job, although hundreds of others applied for it, and I was greatly thrilled.

When I first started work there I thought they were all crazy, and Monsieur N, the secretary, told me he had the same impression when he first came there, but after a time one doesn't notice it any more, probably because one gets crazy too.

Now let me first describe to you all the people that were there.

There was Andree, her chauffeur, a Frenchman. Then there was Phylomene, a negress from Martinique, her maid. When I saw her for the first time I had quite a shock. I had never before seen anybody with a face as black as hers, always grinning at you with her big white teeth, and a deep voice like a man's. But I soon found out that she was a jolly and harmless creature and I rather liked her.

Then there was Monsieur N the secretary, who engaged me, a typical Parisian, her manager, an Italian Count who looked exactly like Adolphe Menjou the film actor, then his cousin a jolly little Italian, a designer and painter of caricatures, and there was Mademoiselle Baker herself.

She was very young, only in her early twenties at that time I think, with a wonderful figure like a young boy, her skin golden brown colour. She had big dark expressive eyes and jet black hair, which was pressed flat to her little head by all kinds of oils and pomades which came every few weeks from America.

When I started work there the first morning, I thought I had come to a madhouse. I had just started reading the mail together with the secretary, when I heard a yell coming from one of the adjoining rooms, as if someone was murdered. I shuddered, but it was only Mademoiselle calling her maid. Then a knock at the door and singing and whistling Signor G the painter came in to enquire if there was any mail for him. He had a room somewhere on the same floor. Then the telephone rang, some impoverished Austrian Countess wanted to sell Mademoiselle Baker her house.

Then another knock at the door, somebody bringing a dog for Mademoiselle because she was known to be fond of animals. Only 100 Schillings. Of course the dog, only a puppy

would jump down and run round barking through all the rooms. Then somebody started to play the piano in the drawing room.

It was like hell let loose. Sometimes also Count A, the manager, would appear trying to read the mail, but no sooner did he sit down than Mademoiselle would come dashing out of the room in her pyjamas, jump on his knees, and start kissing him and behaving like a little wild cat till he would give up to read the letters. She was a real child of nature, utterly uncontrolled, laughing and crying at the same time.

She would lie down on the carpet and play with the little puppy like an innocent child, the next moment she would run after her lover mad with jealousy, threatening to kill him if he dared to leave her. And the poor devil only wanted to go to the hairdresser in the hotel for a shave.

It took me some time to get used to this atmosphere but my work was very interesting. There was mail from all over the world and in all languages. I had to read critics about her in all the papers, which were collected and sent on from agencies in every town she appeared, and translate them into English or French for her.

Then I had to see all the callers and I felt greatly ashamed and toughed about the poverty in Vienna. Every second caller was some private person wanting to sell Mademoiselle Baker his or her jewels, fur coats, pictures, etc, hoping to get some fabulous price. The reason being, that the papers had written about the enormous money she was to get for her engagement in Vienna, and everybody hoped to profit by it.

As she was known to like animals, people came offering her dogs, cats, even rabbits and I had a job to get rid of them before Mademoiselle saw them as she might have bought them all but our menagerie was already quite full without them.

On the stage Mademoiselle Baker was a sensation in Vienna. She sang her songs with a deep sensual voice accompanying it with a certain rhythm of her body, clad only in a little skirt of straw or banana. Her singing and dancing made the dark unknown continent of Africa appear before the eyes of the onlooker and held him spellbound.

Although Josephine Baker herself came from the United States and she had made her fame in Paris, it was probably the blood of her forefathers that made her sing and dance like that.

After a stay of about 3 months in Vienna Josephine Baker had engagements to appear in all European capitals, from the Balkans up to Scandinavia and I was asked to join them on their tournee. The conditions were too tempting for words, I could go either by car, her beautiful Delage, or first class and sleeper on the train, stay in first class hotels and get a marvellous salary and last, and not least, I would see the world.

I was of course longing to go but my father would not allow it. His daughter was not to travel with a dancer through Europe. It was the first time that my father would not give in to me. He was quite firm about it.

I was very upset of course, but as it happened I was glad I did not go away. Not long after my poor father became ill and died about six months later, and I would have never forgiven myself if I had not been with him these last months of his life. And then I might never have met the man I was to love with all my heart, your darling father.

It was in Spring 1929. I was still broken hearted after the death of my father who had died in winter, and whom I missed terribly. I had loved him very dearly, and although he was not young when he died, I could not get over this great loss. After Josephine Baker had left I had taken a job as secretary to a South American Consul. Although he had advertised for a young lady with knowledge of Spanish, I applied for the job without the slightest knowledge of this language and got the job. I told the Consul that I knew French, English and Italian and that I would learn Spanish in no time.

The business hours were very much to my liking, from 10 o'clock in the morning to 4 o'clock in the afternoon and very interesting and easy work. He explained to me the main features of the Spanish grammar, and knowing French and Italian, I found it very easy. After a few weeks time I wrote Spanish letters without a fault and even started to take them down in shorthand.

When father died it was only my work that could distract me from my grief. When Spring came I did not want to take up my beloved tennis again, I had lost all interest in friends or pleasures. It was only because mother and our neighbours who were always very kind to me, insisted upon it that I joined the tennis club in the Prater again but I did so with no joy in my heart.

It seemed to me that with father the sun had gone out of my life. But as fate would have it, just then and there, a new sun came into my life. A sun which was so glorious that it dried my tears and brought a light and happiness to me that I had not known before.

I fell in love.

It was on a lovely Sunday morning in April. I was at the tennis club; I sat on a bench with some other girls, waiting for a foursome to finish, when the Secretary came along with a young man and introduced him to us. He was a young man of about 23 or 24 with deep blue eyes and a nice boyish smile on his pleasant face. He sat down next to me, and being a Viennese he was of course not shy. We talked about sport, first winter sports and then about tennis. He asked me if I had been a member of this club for a long time. I told him that I had been a member there for over two years and that I liked it very much. He said that he had only just joined the club, but he was sure that he was going to like it. He looked straight into my eyes when he said it and I am sure I must have blushed. This made me very annoyed with myself, and then he said something which annoyed me even more at first, till I saw the funny side of it.

He said 'When I told my mother that I was going to join a tennis club, she said she only hoped that no girl would get attached to him this time, as no matter where he went before, be it skiing or playing handball, there was always a girl'. (what he actually said was 'Es ist immer eine picken geblieben' which is a typical Viennese expression.)

'What a silly, conceited fellow I thought', but when I looked at him, and he made a face like an innocent little boy, only repeating his mother's warning words, I had to laugh. I told him to reassure his mother that nothing could happen to him in the club, he was quite safe here. We both had a good laugh. Little did we know then what was really to happen, that a girl was going to get attached to him, for better and for worse, till this very day and please God for many years to come, and that was going to be this girl!

This was the first encounter between Daddy and me, and I often teased him about it later on.

After playing a mixed double together, I went back to the clubhouse to change and when I came out there was 'the newcomer' standing outside waiting for me.

He seemed suddenly very shy, when he asked me in a very correct and polite manner, if I would allow him to see me home. I answered that I lived quite close, only about a 20 minute walk through the Prater, and if he wished he could accompany me. It gave me quite a thrill to see his joy at that.

He was very jolly and entertaining and made me laugh quite a bit, while we walked along. It was for the first time since many months that I felt young and happy again.

When I said goodbye to him, in front of our house, he asked me if he may ring me up and maybe take me out one evening. I thanked him, but declined his offer, as I was still in mourning after my father but would see him again next weekend at the club.

He looked very young and handsome, standing there with his cap in his hand, his beautiful blue eyes pleading with me that a week was a terribly long time. My heart must have softened towards me for I allowed him to phone me up one evening during the week. You see, I was not that type of a girl who quickly made friends, or who could not do without boys.

I was not a very 'modern' girl, I am afraid, I have had quite a lot of admirers like very pretty young girl has, I suppose, and I liked to dance and enjoy myself, but I was no small 'flirt'. I was probably called a 'prude' by many a young man, though I do not think I was one. Only I did not care for all this flirting and kissing that was so customary among the young girls and boys in Vienna.

You see I had that old fashioned idea, that love was something very great and holy, and that I would only marry for love and that the man I would give my heart to, would hold it for ever and evermore. And the Gods were kind to me and let me find the right man and loved me just as deeply in return, and to whom after many years of married life, I am still the only woman he loves as he is for me the only man.

Well we met at first every weekend at the club and then also during the week. When Whitsun came, I told him that mother and I were invited for a few days to the country, and he begged me immediately if he could not come and see me there.

The place we went to was Laxenburg, a little village only a few miles from Vienna. It was famous only because of the old castle there which belonged once to Emperor Franz Joseph, and which stood in most magnificent grounds, which were opened to the public after the war.

We decided to meet on Whit Sunday at Moedling, a place not far from there, and make an excursion on the Anninger, a mountain.....feet high, and make the beautiful walk down the other side to Baden, a famous health resort for the Viennese.

It was a lovely day; the sun was shining warm and the air was soft and full of perfume, as only a spring day in the Vienna Woods can be.

When lunch hour came, we sat down on the grass and unpacked our 'Rucksack' and didn't we enjoy our 'Butterbrote' - I think our appetite was just as big and healthy then, as yours is today, my son.

Then Daddy took out a book and read some poetry to me, while I lay on the grass and looked up at the blue sky above. It was beautiful lyric, which you my children of this modern age, will probably never read.

When the sun began its course towards the West, we said goodbye to dear old Anninger, and walked down towards Baden, singing old Austrian marching tunes while we walked along. Daddy had a very nice voice and we sang:

*Muss i denn, muss i denn, zum Staedtle hinaus, Staedtle hinaus,
Und Du main Schatz bleibst hier,
Wenn i kumm, wenn i kumm, wenn i widerum kumm widerum kumm,
Kehr i ein mein Schatz bei Dir.*

And many more.

Then suddenly on a very beautiful spot, Daddy stopped, and without a word, took me in his arms and kissed me. Very gently at first as if he was afraid to hurt me and again and again. I don't know how long we stood there and kissed each other because time had stopped for us.

When at last I freed myself from his arms, the sun was beginning to set and we walked down towards the station, my head on his shoulder, his arm around me, and none of us spoke.

I walked like in a trance, my face was burning hot, and in my eyes, Daddy told me had come a new shine that was not there before.

I was in love.

Next day we met again under the big old chestnut trees of beautiful Laxenburg Park, and in a little rowing boat on the lake we talked about our love. Daddy told me how much he loved me, and that his greatest wish was to marry me but with the little money that he earned he could not dream of it.

I laughed at the serious look which had suddenly come into his otherwise so gay and carefree face. I kissed the worries away from his forehead. As I did many a time since, and told him that all that mattered was that we loved each other and that we were young and could wait.

I also assured him that I was certain that he would work his way up. I do not know, was it my great love for him that made me confident, or was it the optimism of youth?

Anyway, this, my great and unfailing confidence in his abilities, gave him the necessary strength to fight his way up. Even later on, after we were married, and times were not always easy, I stood at this side, always encouraging and believing in hi, and he never let me down.



The following summer, mother and I spent our holiday in a pretty little place in the country, only about...miles from Vienna, but to get there was a nightmare. Daddy visited me twice. He left Vienna on Saturday evening, travelling all night on a slow train, sitting on a hard bench, waiting for hours at miserable little stations, where he had to change twice, only to stay with me for one day. He went back exactly the same way on Sunday night, to be back at work on Monday morning.

I think one must love someone very much, and be very young, to be able to do this and arrive as gay and cheerful as he did.

We wrote to each other every day, and I kept these, his first love letters in a little box till this very day.

When we came back to Vienna, Daddy told me that his only chance of getting on was to travel and make exports for his firm, but unfortunately he did not know any languages.

He assured me that he had taken up English once, but he had absolutely no gift for languages. Well there is no such thing as 'can't', I told him, as I have often told you too Peterle, and there is only one thing, that is to try, try, and try again.

And I made Daddy try very hard. First I taught him English and later also French. I was very strict with him and...he learned alright. Maybe his accent was not very good, and he had difficulty to understand when he came to England for the first time. But he could talk to people and that was all he needed. He was very successful on his first business journey to England, and this was the beginning of his career as Export Manager.

This did not only enable us to marry, but later on also decided us to settle in England a short time before Hitler marched into Austria, and this most probably saved our lives. About all this I will tell you later on.

First, let me describe to you the happy and jolly time we had together in Austria before we married.

In winter, we went skiing together, that is say, although I had been skiing before, Daddy did not consider my skiing any good at all. He was just as strict in teaching me this beautiful sport as I was in teaching him languages.

Every Sunday in winter, you could see thousands of people leave their homes very early in the morning to catch the first trains to take them to the mountains all around Vienna, or if there was enough snow on the hills of the Vienna Woods, you could just take the tram and in 45 minutes you could enjoy glorious winter sports.

If you live in England, you have to go a long way to be able to ski, and it is rather an expensive pleasure I'm afraid. Not in Austria. Even the poorest Viennese could afford the fare for the tram or the train journey to the mountains, they were so near, and we had a lot of snow. Daddy gave up making big excursions with his friends in order to teach me. I was very keen, and although I never became a star, I picked it up quite well.

Later on Daddy, who was a good skier, took me also on some excursions with, and it was wonderful. It often meant climbing up the mountains for two hours or more, as there were no ski lifts then, and only on the Rax, a mountain 6,000 feet high, you could get up by cable railway. But I did not mind climbing up, carrying my skis bravely on my shoulders, if only I

had the pleasure of a beautiful run down afterwards. And the beauty of this scenery! The snow covered mountains, the pine trees, loaded with snow, glittering in the sun, and the air so pure and clear, it made you feel so strong and free as if all the world belonged to you.

We spent very, very happy hours together in our beloved mountains, and were almost sorry when spring came, and we had to say goodbye to it all.

But spring also brought many beautiful and happy days for us. We played tennis in our club together and in the evening walked home through the Prater, living up to the old Viennese song:

*Im Prater bluehn wieder die Baume
Es leuchtet ihr duftendes Gruen
Drum kuess nur, kuess und nicht säume
Dann Fruehling ist wieder in Wien.*

Sometimes we went a whole crowd of young people to the Wurstelprater in the evening, where we had a lot of fun. We sat under old chestnut trees of the beer gardens there, eating Vienna sausages and drinking brown beer at rough wooden tables, and enjoying ourselves for little money. Daddy was very jolly and gay, and often entertained the whole crowd. Later on, in summer, we went swimming to Kritzendorf or Klosterneuburg, lovely weekend colonies at the Danube, where people had their own little houses or huts, or where you just could rent a cabin for the day. You should have seen these places on a warm Sunday in summer or autumn. What crowds of gay young people. There were open air coffeehouses with music.



When Daddy first introduced me to his family I was naturally a bit excited, but I soon felt at ease with all of them. His father was a quiet little man, his mother the type of Jewish mother who always worried if her children only had enough to eat. Then there was his sister, only a year or two older than Daddy, but as different to him as day is to night. Whereas Daddy loved to enjoy life and always a great optimist, she only worried and fussed and was always pessimistic in everything, but both were strangely attached to each other.



The nicest of them was Heinz, her husband. He was the nicest and kindest brother-in-law anybody could wish for, and like a real brother to Daddy and me. Then there was Walter their baby son, a sweet fat little thing of about one year then, now a lad of more than 6 feet in height, when I last saw him.

Daddy used to come early nearly every evening to my home while we were engaged, and he and my mother got on quite well together.

But it was not till two years after we first met that Daddy and I could marry. They were two happy years, although things did not always look too bright. You see the prospects for a young man in Vienna at that time were not too good. Since the 1914-18 War, unemployment figures were rising, dissatisfaction grew, and there was no security in Austrian internal policy.

First there was a big Socialist riot, where many people got killed, then the 'Heimwehr' a Fascist party started trouble, and our Chancellor Dollfuss was murdered.

Daddy had no support whatsoever from his family and only because our love and our will is to belong to each other was so strong he succeeded at last to fight his way up. As we say in England 'Where there is a will there is a way' and at last the great day for us came.

It was on the 7th of June 1931 in Vienna that we became man and wife.

The sun shone brilliantly in a cloudless sky. I think God, seeing two of his children so gloriously happy, decided to make it a most perfect day. The only thing that dimmed the brightness of that day for me was the sad thought that my darling father was not there to share my happiness with me. But no matter where he was, I felt he had given me his blessing, for he himself could not have chosen a better or kinder man for his child, or one who would have loved or cherished her more.

I wore a dress of white lace and chiffon and Daddy wore tails and a white bow tie and a top hat. There were a lot of people at our wedding, and I overheard many flattering comments, like 'What a beautiful bride', 'What a handsome couple', as I walked along on Daddy's arm after the ceremony.



If I look at these two young smiling faces of our wedding picture over there on the piano, I must admit we were quite a good looking pair, and although quite a number of years have gone by since, we were often told by friends that we have not changed much.

We spent our honeymoon in Luzern, in Switzerland, where we stayed in a sweet little 'Pension', right on the shore of the lake. The weather was beautifully warm for June, and I remember those glorious mornings, when we sat on our balcony in the lovely sunshine and enjoyed our breakfast. The view was wonderful, below the lake glittering like silver in the early morning sun, and opposite the snow covered peaks of distant glaciers. We spent 10 very very happy days there, living only for each other and enjoying the beautiful scenery.

From there we went to Zurich, this clean and busy little town, with its lovely shops along the 'Bahnhofstrasse', those watch and jewellers shops, famous all over the world. I liked the narrow streets and quaint old houses of the Middle Ages in the 'Altstadt' with its dreaming old courtyards, its flowers at the windows, and its beautiful clock towers.

And then Paris. I had always wished to see this Queen of Europe's capitals. The centre of art, culture and fashions and yet my first impression was one of disappointment. After Austria and Switzerland, France seemed so dirty. The houses so old and neglected but strange after a time you do not notice these things any more, and you begin to see Paris with different eyes. I began to love it, not only the big Boulevards and the elegant shops of the Rue de la Paix and Faubourg St. Honore, the impressive Champs Elysee and the Place de la Concorde, but also the little side streets with its hundreds of bistros, where the vrai Parisienne drinks his coffee.

I walked for miles in Paris, climbing up the narrow cobbled stone streets that take you up to the Montmartre with its quaint old houses where the artists from all over the world live and paint. You see them standing there on summer evenings painting under the dim light of the street-lamps on the Place de Theatre, the little square high up on the Montmartre.

What life, what gaiety, what a brilliant object for an artist. The square crowded with little tables full of gay people eating and drinking and kissing under the shaded lamps, or walking arm in arm up and down, singing to the music that comes of every doorway of these lovely old houses. I loved this atmosphere so unique in its charme, and when Daddy

and I walked along and stood in front of the beautiful white building of the capital Sacre Coeur and looked down 'sur les toits de Paris' we knew that we would always love Paris.

From there we went on to London, where Daddy had to attend to business. This was my first visit to England which later was to become 'meine zweite Heimat' my second home.

As soon as we had arrived in England the weather had changed. After the beautiful summer weather on the Continent we had rain from the first day we arrived and it rained nearly every day for the two weeks we stayed in London. I was frightened at first to cross Oxford Street and Daddy had to drag me across. I was not used to such traffic. Once Daddy took me along to the City between 9 and 10 in the morning and I stood there at the corner of the Bank, watching the enormous crowds coming out of Undergrounds and buses, going to their offices quietly and disciplined like nowhere in the world. I was greatly impressed and I liked especially the appearance of the men, all in dark suits, bowler hats, umbrellas on their arm and gloves in their hands, immaculate. And when I saw their nice and polite manners, especially towards women, I began to understand the meaning of 'An English Gentleman'. And I told Daddy quite seriously, after we were back in Vienna, if I ever had a son, I would like him to be educated in England, to become an English Gentleman.

And Daddy and I decided then and there to send 'Our Son' to one of those famous English Public Schools, and...our wish was fulfilled. Four years later a son was born to us and now he is really going to one of the finest English Public Schools, to Charterhouse. But to make this possible, many things had to happen, great things, terrible things, of which we had no idea when we planned this.

Yes, we always liked to plan and dream and hope for the nice things in life, and amazingly many of our daydreams became true.

I remember those happy winter evenings Daddy and I used to spend the first years of our married life. I used to sit on his knees in our big armchair in front of a cosy fire, while the snow fell thick and soft in the streets of Vienna. Leaning my cheek against his, we talked and dreamed about all the lovely places we would visit together, and all the wonderful things we would do.

And when Xmas or Easter came, we packed our skis and off we went to spend a few glorious days in our beloved mountains. Many a times we did not know if we would have enough money to pay the rent of our sweet but expensive little home, but we went and enjoyed ourselves and somehow we always managed alright.

I am sure many times my mother and Daddy's parents shook their heads at these light-hearted children of theirs but...how does one of the old Viennese songs say:

*Menschen, Menschen, san mer alle
Fehler hat a jeder g'nua,
Alle koennen ja net gleich sein,
Das liegt schon so in der Natur.*

In the summer of 1934 we spent 3 glorious weeks on the shores of the Adriatic, on the idyllic island or Arbe, or Rab as the Yugoslavs call it. It was a beautiful little place, and we loved it from the moment we arrived in the tiny harbour. Everything was white. The sweet little houses, the sails of the hundreds of little sailing boats and also the dresses and shorts worn by the gay young crowd of holidaymakers at the quayside. The sky was deep blue and so

was the water, and there was never a cloud, only sunshine every day of these three wonderful weeks.

Every morning Pietro, our handsome young boatman, greeted us with 'Dobri Itro', as he helped us into his boat to take us across to the other side of the island to the beach. He had a lovely voice and he always sang old Slav folk songs as he rowed or sailed us across. We went swimming morning and afternoon, some people even went swimming in the night. It was very hot and nobody went to bed before 3 o'clock in the morning. There was music and dancing everywhere in the open, sweet little places, where you drank the wine of the island, and everything was so ridiculously cheap. Of course it was all modest and primitive compared to the luxury of the hotels and places in the South of France, but the beauty and romantic setting could compare with any of the famous places of the Cote d'Azur.

When the moon rose like a silver ball behind the walls of the old Castello built by Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, and the cypress and mango trees in the 'Euphemiabucht' looked dark and mysterious against the silver water, no setting could have been more beautiful and more romantic. It was a paradise for young people and for lovers.

When we left we promised to come back again, but 9 months later our baby was born, and that brought a big change to our life.

It was on the 1st of April 1935, that you my son Peter, or Peterle as I called you then, were born. I remember this day as if it had been yesterday. I woke up, still a bit drowsy, when I heard the doctor say "You have a son". "Oh, my husband will be pleased" was all I managed to say, and then I saw the nurse holding a screaming little object up and I thought: "Thank God it is not a girl, if it had to be so ugly". You see darling, you were the first new born baby I had seen in my life, and they never look beautiful. The nurse assured me, you were the most perfect little baby a mother could wish for and when I showed you later to Daddy, I felt very proud and happy. My son, our son.....



Poor Daddy, he looked very pale and worn out, as if he, not I, had gone through the pains of childbirth and everybody teased him that he really needed a holiday. Daddy was very happy, but I did not think any man could feel this wonderful, glorious happiness a woman feels, when her first baby is born.

Every morning, when I woke up in my nice, white room in the Nursing Home, with the windows wide open, I could hear the birds singing in the garden, and my heart sang with them: You have a son, a son!! I dared not move for fear I would wake up and find it was only a dream. But after a while the door would open, and a nice young nurse would bring my baby in for its first feed of the day. I would feel its soft warm body in my arms and its sweet little head nestling against my breast, and my happiness was of a kind I had never known before.

The happiness of being in love, the joy and happiness I felt when Daddy took me home as his young bride, it all seemed so small compared to this new and wonderful feeling of fulfilment and motherhood brought me. Yes, I am sure these first days after your birth, my son, were the happiest days of my life. For although you brought me a lot of happiness, while I watched you grow up, my darling, you also gave me a lot of worry, for you were the sweetest, but most mischievous little boy that ever was born. With your big blue eyes and your head of the fairest of curls, you looked like one of Botticelli's beautiful angels, but my God, what a little devil you were in reality!

When only 3 months old you succeeded in breaking your first rattle in two, and 6 further ones followed in due course, till I forbid both your grandmothers to provide you with new material in your lust for destruction. Then you started acrobatic exercises. First while lying on your tummy, later on your knees, you practiced the most amazing acrobatics every moment while being awake, till you would suddenly fall asleep in the craziest positions.

I knew then that your vitality promised to be quite extraordinary. And so it was. With 6 months you sat up and with 8½ months you began standing up in your cot. From that moment onwards you would not sit down and with 9 months you walked nicely along in your playpen. I think it was at that age, that you would have already needed somebody firm and strict, for it was at this tender age that you started enjoying your being mischievous. Nobody could be so quick and stop you throwing bottles or jars on the floor if they were within your reach and when you had your bath you splashed so much that everybody and everything around you was drenched. With 11 months you were already so wild that you succeeded in ruining the playpen that new screws had to be put in.

But the worst thing was that you simply refused to sit on your little pot. Not even by force was I able to make you sit on it, you yelled and kicked the pot to the other end of the nursery. You hurt your little nose in the fight, but you did not care, as long as you did not have to sit on this silly pot. The next thing was that you refused to sleep in your pram, would not even sit down in it but loved to put your legs over the side till you succeeded in



hanging over the edge supported only by the belt or doing other acrobatics till the pram nearly tipped over. But the trouble was I just could not be cross with you. If after all this mischief you looked at me with your big blue eyes full of laughter and the dimple in your right cheek I just could not help laughing andloving you.

But I shall never forget your first birthday. Cousin Walter, 6 years older than my little darling and also a little handful brought you a birthday present, a little bucket and spade. The first thing you did, Peterle, was to throw both these things at his head. Whereupon big strong 7 year old Walter landed you one with all his force. I shall not allow a baby to hit me was his natural excuse when his mother spanked him. After this little Intermezzo both played very nicely,

Part 2

The other day when I felt very very lonely I looked for something to do and I began tidying up some drawers, I suddenly came across the little book I had written so many years ago for you my children, about the country where your parents were born and the happy times we spent there.

It seems like a dream to me now and I wish I could wake up and all the sadness of my heart would be gone.....So much has happened in all these years both good and bad, like probably in everybody's life, but you can take it all if you are together, but if your Beloved has gone, then the sun has gone out of your life and with it the joy and as the French call it, 'the Joie de vivre' which we both had all our life together.....

I want to tell you my children and also of course my grandchildren, Peter's children, who are now nearly 18 and 20 and my little Wendy's children, who are now 10 and 13 years old. We always called her our little Wendy as she came 11 years after Peter, and she made up for all the worries we had with our firstborn. She was the sweetest and easiest child one could have wished for.



But now let me first tell you how it happened that we came to live in England.

Daddy was appointed Export Director by the biggest textile companies of Czechoslovakia. They had their own spinning and weaving mills and Daddy was in charge of the whole Western Countries, like France, Belgium, Holland and England. England became the most important and he had to spend more and more time in England away from home. Daddy decided that sooner or later we shall have to move to live in England altogether. In November 1937 Daddy wrote to me to Vienna that he is not waiting any longer. I should come to London and look for an apartment. The political situation in German under Hitler also became worse, although in Austria nobody believed that Austria could lose its independence.

I arrived in England of course (by train and boat at that time) in the worst fog England ever had. It was a nightmare. Still I had to look around for an apartment on my own as Daddy was far too busy to go with me. I thought I would like to live in one of the nice blocks overlooking Regent's Park which was similar situated to our apartment we had in Vienna, near the Belvedere Park. When I heard the price they charged for the rent in London I knew that this part of London was only for millionaires. I got in touch with the agents and I was advised to look for a flat in the north of London, like Hendon, Golders Green etc. I got very depressed when I saw the flats there. Small rooms, dark kitchens, drawing room and dining room not communicating, how different from our flat in Vienna with its beautiful spacy rooms, its double doors leading from one to the other.....

One day I met the wife of our London agent, they came from Germany and asked her for advice. She said there is one district you must look for a flat and that is where most of the German Jews had their houses and you will love it. Well we arranged that she took me next day by car to Hampstead Garden Suburb.

If it had not been for the help of the wife of his agent who came originally from Germany and lived in the north of London, I do not know what I would have done..... Vienna was like a little village compared to the size of London.

We went by car to Hampstead and then round the Hampstead Heath. 'This is where you should live' she said, this is the highest and healthiest part of London. When I looked out of the car I could see nothing but fog, and shuddered to think that one could live so far from 'town' as in Vienna people lived in walking distance from the centre of the town. I was heartbroken when I saw the tiny rooms in the modern blocks compared to the beautiful large elegant rooms of my Viennese flat. In the end I found a block where the flats were only half finished and the builder promised to connect the drawing and the dining room with glass doors to open. (An unusual thing at this time in London). He promised everything would be ready beginning of February and so we decided to move to London in February. We went back to Vienna, but Daddy had to leave soon again on his business trips and left the packing for me. I handed all my furniture etc. over to a forwarding agent and everything would be packed in 'lifts' that means big cases. While the cases would be on the way, which would take about 2 weeks, we decided instead of staying in London in a hotel, I should rather stay with Peter and a governess I had to engage in Vienna, in Kitzbuhel which is a lovely place in the Austrian mountains and also much cheaper than a hotel in London.

My mother then asked me to stay the last week with Peter in her apartment. I did so, but imagine my surprise when I came home one day from shopping, my mother told me that Daddy had phoned from London sounded terribly excited and I should phone him back immediately. I did so but could not understand his excitement. He wanted me to go to Thomas Cook and get a sleeper and leave within a day or two, but not for Kitzbuhel but for Switzerland. At that time one did not fly but went by train and sleeper. I could not understand what the hurry was, but he said don't ask, just do as I told you and phone me back. Of course I could not get a sleeper at such short notice, and the governess could also not leave immediately. I phoned him and told him so. My mother said she could not understand the hurry and I should stay at least a week with her, but our neighbour who knew me since I was a little girl, said whatever the reason may be I must do what my husband asked me to do. Well the earliest sleeper I could get was for the middle of the following week. Daddy sounded a little better on the phone and agreed that I should go then, but not to Austria but to Switzerland. The governess could come with me by then, for to travel alone with Peter, would have been hell. So I left Vienna, still could not understand what the hurry was until I came to Switzerland. There sitting in the hotel Weisses Kreuz, (Peter at last asleep) and reading the Swiss paper I began to understand why Daddy was so excited and wanted me to leave Austria as quickly as possible. Hitler had ordered the Austrian Chancellor Mr. Schuschnigg to see him and agree to all his demands otherwise the Nazis, his troops who stood already at Austria's border, ready to march into Austria if Mr Schuschnigg would not sign.

You see in Austria we knew nothing what was going on, but Daddy had read about it in the English papers, and he was afraid that the Nazis were going to march into Austria and I and Peter would not have been able to leave. Although Schuschnigg had to agree to all Hitler's demands a few weeks later, the German troops marched in, but thanks to Daddy I was then safely in England.

Although the builder had promised that everything would be ready by then, it was not. But nothing mattered, we were together.....The first evening when at last we sat hand in hand in our drawing room on our settee and I turned the radio on (I had a specially strong

'Antenna' made in order to be able to hear Vienna, the first thing we heard was the speech by our Austrian prime minister Schuschnigg saying goodbye to his Austrian people as he had to hand over his 'Vaterland' to the Germans. It was the most moving speech. Daddy and I sat there listening with tears in our eyes. There would be no more Austria, only Germany.....and all one could then hear people screaming 'Heil Hitler'.

Well this was only the beginning. Little did we know what was to follow. The persecution of the Jews in Germany under Hitler took years. Jews who had money paid a certain sum and were allowed to leave the country and it became only gradually worse like Jewish doctors were not allowed to practice, big companies that belonged to Jews were taken over by Aryans, but the Jews were not actually maltreated and many who could have left the country then believed that nothing bad would happen to them, after all they were good Germans. Many having fought in the First World War for Germany. But in Austria from the day the Nazis walked in the Jews were maltreated and degraded in a way which started in Germany much later.

Of course the Jews tried to leave the country but they were not allowed to take any money or possessions of value with them. Now which country would have them?

The United States was an emigration country, but there was a quota and it depended where you were born and only a certain amount of people of each country were allowed per year.

England was not an emigration country and one could only come here if you proved that you had means to support yourself and your family, but you were not allowed to take a job here. Now my mother was an elderly woman and she was not going to work here and Daddy could prove that he was in a position to support her. She came in May. She told us how our beloved Vienna had changed. Elderly Jewish men or women were forced to scrub the pavement for the entertainment of the Nazis and much worse things.

Now the English Jews petitioned the government to allow Jewish children to come to England and they came trainloads of them, many never to see their parents any more.

Now we tried desperately to bring Daddy's family to England but we could not get a visa for them. They had applied for an American visa, which they only could get if an American guaranteed for them and if they were in the right quota. Daddy's parents had a number of relations in America and they all sent Affidavits, which meant that they guaranteed for them, but they still had to wait for their quota, which unfortunately was very small as they were born in Poland.

Now Daddy applied to the Home Office to let them come here only to wait till their American Visa would come through. Under the greatest difficulties he got the permission at last for his parents and also for his sister with her husband and son. We rented a flat in the same building which was still empty and at last they came. All without any money or valuables, as in Austria Hitler immediately proclaimed that Jews can only leave the country if they leave all their belongings behind.

Daddy who was not even 33 years old then had to prove for 3 families. Daddy's parents would have loved to remain in England and although many parents of our friends were allowed to remain in England, we applied three times but they were denied to stay here as they came here with the understanding that they would only stay till their American quota i.e. visa, would come through. In the meantime the danger of war drew nearer and Leni and her family left by boat of course for New York, as soon as they got the visa.

I cannot remember if they had the tickets or if the Jewish Aid for Refugees got them their tickets.

Daddy applied again for the parents the permission to stay here guaranteeing that he would support them, but once you said that they were only awaiting their visa, no way could you change this and they had to leave with the next boat. In the meantime the war had broken out and they got safely to America.